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CRISIS AND REVOLT IN IRAN TODAY

NONPOLITICS CAPITALISM, FASCISM, FEMINISM, IRAN, RELIGION

The following article is an interview with Shirin Kamangar by Warren Montag and Joseph Serrano and was published first here on November 28, 2022.

1. You have argued that the recent revolt in Iran, while initially focused on the mandatory hijab, was preceded by a series of earlier revolts (from 2017-2022) whose focus was the removal of price controls on food staples and fuel and which contributed to a de-legitimation of the regime. Has the current movement embraced some of the economic

demands of the earlier movements or perhaps simply expressed the people's anger with the persistent efforts at neoliberal reforms? Which sectors of society are most represented in the movement and is it continuing to grow?

There is a general tendency to reduce the broad struggling mass to the “young generation” which imposes on it a homogeneity or an identity which it in fact lacks. Different social groups from various geographical locations and class positions participate in the ongoing protest. It is important to recognize the play of different forces and demands which are temporarily united around the shared objective of overthrowing the existing regime. If the current movement culminates in the downfall of the regime, the diversity and heterogeneity of forces will become more visible.

Regarding the economic demands, the mainstream media in the West refuses to admit that the crisis and contradictions in Iran are those of capitalism, which in its uneven development has taken its present form. Instead, they attempt to translate them into the specific contradictions of an Islamic state. I, borrowing Lenin's terms, describe Iran as “the weakest link” in the chain of capitalist states as it is simultaneously the most “backward” and the most “advanced” in its capitalist relations, which leads to powerful contradictions. Its backwardness originates from the lack of unions, representative organizations and professional associations that act as an intermediary between capitalists and the wage earners to reduce class tensions. In this sense, it may be seen as an advanced form of neoliberal capitalism in that the State does not interfere in the market by controlling the prices, providing welfare services, or distributing food during the times of shortage. More importantly, all the State-owned industrial plants have been sold off to the military forces. While in other capitalist societies, the State's interference as a repressive arm to ensure the accumulation of capital is rendered invisible, in Iran, capital is controlled directly by the armed forces. Capital is so completely merged with the repressive apparatus that it has created the illusion that the State intervenes in the economy. However, rather than a statist economy, we are facing a new phenomenon, characterized by a “privatized State” and “militarized capital,” serving the benefits of a minority who are closely tied to the regime and paying absolutely no heed to the popular demands of the dispossessed masses. This is a capitalist state in its most violent form. From this perspective, Iran can no longer be understood as an “irrational” nation belonging to the world of medieval Islam; rather, it unfailingly acts according to the “irrationality” proper to the free market and neo-liberalism in its fullest expression. Capitalist relations here offer an image of capitalism's future rather than an order stuck in the early stages of capitalist “progress.”

As against the dominant discourse of the mainstream media in the West which reduces the ongoing mass struggle to a spontaneous protest sparked over the forced Hijab, the popular uprising is an overdetermined process which encompasses a history of at least two decades of consecutive struggle by workers, teachers, retirees, nurses, students, and rank-and-file groups against poverty, high rates of unemployment, wage cuts, a low standard of living, deterioration of purchasing power, and political oppression. Though the economic demands of the current uprising are largely overlooked by the right opposition in Iran and abroad, as well as the

mainstream media, the fact that over 70 percent of the population in Iran belong to the working class means that the mass struggle today is inseparable from the class struggle. What arouses public anger at Jina's killing by the regime is the general discontent with not only the necro-ideological mechanisms of the regime but also the necro-economics produced by the large-scale privatization of state-owned enterprises which began a decade after the 1979 revolution according to the programs developed by "Dr. IMF" and "his majesty the World Bank." The purpose was to remedy the lack of a State budget through the removal of state subsidies, which was supposed to reduce unemployment and increase economic efficiency supposedly hampered by State intervention. In practice, however, a thousand workers are dismissed and those remaining experience wage cuts and are deprived of job security and traditional services, such as insurance or allowances to cover the costs transportation, food, and clothing, as is clearly indicated in the demands put forward in workers struggles. The four public uprisings within the last five years, known as the uprising of "the hungry" and "the thirsty," dozens of strikes and street demonstrations by workers in different industries, and seven organized demonstrations in 180 cities in 2021 alone by teachers clearly testifies to the devastating effects of the removal of State subsidies which has deprived a majority of people of the basic means of subsistence.

In the face of unprecedented inflation and the decrease in the real value of their income, the workers of the informal sector and the unemployed cannot afford housing and such phenomena as "grave sleepers," "bus sleepers," "roof renters," and "garbage scavengers" have become commonplace. Most shocking of all is the recent emergence of a booming market in "body organs" sold by the destitute who have no other way to make a living. This year, in less than three months, 10 workers committed suicide for economic reasons and 800 workers annually lose their lives in workplace "accidents" the employers could have easily prevented if there existed standard work safety regulations.

If we read the absence of any reporting on the economic demands of the protestors in the Western mainstream media symptomatically, the causes of this absence become clear. The right opposition has correctly realized that the neo-liberal program, above all the privatization essential to it, has led to disastrous consequences. Faced with a closed door, the right is trying to appeal to the public by entering through another door, that of "democracy," by reducing the current movement to a "democratic" movement. The model of Western parliamentary democracy which the right seeks to import and in doing so to present the current conjuncture as a struggle for democracy, or rather the democracy compatible with capitalism, loses its legitimacy when we look at the events of the last century in the region: the wars and coups d'états designed by the CIA and MI6 to overthrow the government of Mohammad Mossadegh (appointed prime minister of Iran by a large parliamentary vote) which nationalized the oil industry, and more recently the US invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. These few examples out of many should suffice to dispel any illusions regarding the commitment of the Western powers to freedom and democracy. It is not the "specialists," "capitalists," or high-ranking managers whom Reza Pahlavi promises to support who will pay the price for neoliberal democracy but the toilers, workers, the unemployed, underemployed, and precarious workers.

I think the right's insistence on the "sacredness" of secularism and democracy and their refusal to recognize the uprising of "the hungry" and "the thirsty" as unworthy of political recognition and incompatible with the ideals of human dignity is symptomatic of their awareness that the neoliberal economic re-structuring they propose necessarily entails further destitution, joblessness, homelessness, and hunger that not even the invisible hand of Adam Smith can conjure away.

2. Given the intensity of the repression, it must be very difficult to organize the movement or even part of the movement in order to plan actions that have a strategic function and to arrive at a common set of demands. To what extent has it been possible to coordinate the university and neighborhood groups and to have discussions about the next steps?

The student movement has been one of the most persistent since the beginning of the uprising. Despite mass arrests and suspensions, students from major cities have been able to stage campus protests on a daily basis and undermine the ideological means of subjection by breaking gender segregation rules, refusing to attend the classes, and painting the classroom doors red to mark the blood that has been shed by protestors. They immediately react to all the socio-political issues, from the massacre of Baluchi protestors to the mass arrest of the students. The continuity of their movement both preserves the revolutionary atmosphere and acts as the nodal point linking different social groups and mobilizing them.

After the students of Sharif University of Tehran were trapped in the underground parking structure by plainclothes agents and shot by tear gas, rubber bullets, paintballs and finally detained, the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Workers union published a statement condemning the violent attack against the students. They recalled the support extended by the students to the workers' movement in the preceding years and promised to stand with them. The statement denounced the use of tear gas, electric cattle prods, rubber bullets, and other means of state repression against the students as a blatant crime whose perpetrators must be identified, and the arrested students immediately released.

The Coordination Shura (council) of Cultural Guild Societies of Iran also reacted to the Sharif disaster by announcing a teachers' strike in support of the of the students and against the violent state repression. Teachers at a number of schools, above all in Kurdistan province, went on strike the following day.

The Retirees' union also released a statement in condemnation of the harsh repression at "Sharif University" and criticized the collaboration between the university chairman, the campus security center, and student members of the pro-government Basiji paramilitary group in the attack on the protesting students.

The high school students and students from major universities also supported the Sharif University students. They took off their scarves, tore up the portray of Ayatollah Khomeini and Khamenei on the first page of their book, broke their pictures hanging on the class walls and replaced them with such slogans as "Women, Life, liberty."

Around 600 university professors signed a declaration asking the authorities to release the imprisoned students and stop militarizing the university.

Apart from daily strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations and declarations, students have formulated strategies on how to overcome the existing obstacles and prepare for short-term and long-term collective actions. In a student declaration posted on social media, they noted the importance of forming strike committees, defense committees for those arrested and suspended cases, legal consultancy committees, committees to find accommodations for students expelled from dormitories, as well as for the families of the imprisoned who travel from other cities. The students have also recognized the necessity of inter and intra-university solidarity to build a massive movement, and of making transitional demands such as the annulment of mandatory hijab, the abolition of gender-segregation in the university, the dissolution of disciplinary committees, and the release of detained or imprisoned students.

Regarding the neighborhoods, the regime's infiltration and massive arrests has fostered an attitude of distrust and "fear your neighbor," where "anyone can be a plainclothes agent," which prevents the formation of large neighborhood groups. Meanwhile, economic pressures have condemned many people to a nomadic existence, as they must constantly seek more affordable areas. In this way, they are denied the chance to get to know their neighbors or trust them in critical times. However, an increasing number of declarations have been posted to social media by neighborhood groups engaged in mass mobilization.

What is interesting is that the masses now refuse to retreat into private life, but rather extend the revolutionary atmosphere in different ways: they avoid unnecessary shopping, restrict their activities on social media to spreading news on the daily struggle, and boycott businesses that cooperate with the repressive forces. The mass attendance at the funerals of those killed in the street struggle itself gives rise to massive upheavals, creating protest art, songs, and poems, graffiti all over the city walls and banners, and the distribution of newspapers containing the latest news on the revolt. These forms of daily struggle are appearing all around the country.

3. Can you explain the role that the oppression of ethnic minorities (Kurds, Baluchis, Turkic peoples, etc.) and their resistance to this oppression has played in the current struggles?

I'm going to use "national minorities" rather than "ethnic minorities," because the former acknowledges the subordination of different minorities to the hegemonic Farsi nation. Iran from its ancient origins has always been composed of a variety of nationalities, but when Reza Shah became monarch in 1925, he undertook a "modernization" program according to which defining the nation-state as Farsi placed the other nationalities in an inferior position socio-politically. However, since that time, whenever there is a weakening of state power, there is resistance, often manifested in the formation of autonomous communities. In 1941, when Reza Shah was removed from the throne by a combined British and Soviet invasion designed to secure Iran's oil supplies, Turkish and Kurdish nationalities formed independent republics known as the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Mahabad (or Kurdistan), although both were soon suppressed by

force by the government of the newly restored Shah.

After the 1979 revolution, all the national minorities recognized themselves as self-organized and autonomous communities, only, once again, to be crushed by the new regime. Not only did Khomeini's regime continue the previous Farsi nation-state policies but added justification for Farsi domination: Shiism. This move, the immediate policy of the new regime, deepened the already existing oppression of the non-Farsi, non-Shiite, minority nations, including Azerbaijan, Baluchistan, Khuzestan, Kurdistan, and Turkaman Sahra.

The notion of a right to self-determination during and after 1979 revolution was not recognized by much of the anti-imperialist left, who feared that the absence of a powerful centralized State would create an opportunity for the imperialist powers to create divisions that would lead to the fall of the new regime and thus permit them to resume plundering our natural resources. The discourses of defending the nation against the external enemy and of "anti-imperialism" turned into a justification for policies that amount to an internal colonization that seeks to transform the non-Farsi and non-Shiite population (which together constitute a significant percentage of the nation's population) into non-citizens, whose existence as "others," with their own languages and cultures is increasingly seen as unacceptable. The regime has used various means of cultural and linguistic assimilation to dissolve the different populations into a unified nation and imposes a double exploitation on them by the unequal distribution of wealth and resources, and through various means of deprivation and oppression. The Left in Iran must redefine its "anti-imperialist" discourse in a way that clearly distinguishes it from the current regime's calculated manipulation of the concept of anti-imperialism as a means of extending its control over the lives of the people. The Left must be able to account for, explain, and oppose the Iranian government regime's regional interventions in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon, as well as the new imperialisms represented by China and Russia (both of which operate extractivist enterprises in Iran), to be able to address the problems we are now facing.

The historical lessons the Kurdish masses have learned and the political experience they have gained is today very visible in their struggles. In Kurdistan province, where the influence of the Kurdistan liberation movement in Iraq, Syria and Turkey is strong, the people reject the idea that a centralized state, whether Islamic or secular, neoliberal or patriarchal, is a necessity. In some parts of Kurdistan today there exists a situation of something like dual power, in which popular forces have taken over administrative functions such as directing traffic and responding to emergencies, while monitoring the activities of the agents of the Iranian state. They have even managed to transform the Mosque, one of the main ideological apparatuses of the state, into a site for the transmission of revolutionary culture, playing revolutionary songs over the same loudspeakers through which the call to prayer is broadcast five times a day.

Finally, I should note that the problem does not simply lie with an intolerant Shiite clergy. Sunni clerics in Sistan and Baluchistan Province, one of the nation's poorest regions, reduce the multiplicity of existing social and political contradictions to the difference between Sunni and Shiite Islam, thereby overlooking the economic deprivation and exploitation imposed on them by the existing capitalist relations of production. Though these clerics possess popular support and

credibility and are capable of mobilizing large numbers against the regime when they choose to, the Left in Iran must not repeat the mistakes of 1979 and regard them as reliable allies in the current struggle. These same clerics are supporters of the Taliban (the province shares a border with both Afghanistan and Pakistan) and in many ways represent a threat to any genuinely anti-capitalist movement. They are in part responsible for the present destitution of the Baluchi population.

4. While it is not yet clear that the regime is in its final crisis, the question of what will replace it looms large outside of Iran, where the signs point to a candidate with at least some credibility in Iran who can attract popular support and accelerate the neoliberal reforms demanded by the IMF and the World Bank. The former Shah's son, Reza Pahlavi, is one such figure and there are others. How does the movement and its left wing in particular intend to confront this challenge?

The right opposition has gone so far in its stupidity as to set a date for the downfall of the regime. No one can really predict when the regime will collapse, given the gigantic repressive apparatus it has at its disposal. The right favors a rapid overthrow of the regime, preferably by the internal forces, because the chaos and power vacuum that would follow would definitely facilitate their seizure of power, while a lengthier process would allow the various oppositional forces, including those that are explicitly anti-capitalist, to emerge, organize, coordinate, plan, and strategize. Once such a movement reaches a certain threshold it becomes very difficult for them to take and hold power.

Reza Pahlavi has absolutely no credibility for movement activists in Iran as far as I can see. In fact, one of the main slogans of the current uprising, which is entirely omitted from mainstream media accounts is “down with the tyrant, be it Supreme leader or the Shah.” The downfall of the Shah's regime was not that long ago and there still are many families whose closest relatives were imprisoned, violently tortured, and killed by the SAVAK, the Shah's secret police.

However, as you say, the right simply introduces other possible leading figures when it realizes that one of them has lost popularity. As historical experience shows, what matters for the right is to guarantee the preservation of capitalist relations, whether under an Islamic regime whose leader, Ayatollah Khomeini was supported by the western powers before and after the 1979 revolution, or a secular one.

Any alternative to the present regime must be able to address the concrete demands that have been expressed in the people's struggles; the fact that certain problems have led to such struggles is objective proof of their importance. I will mention some of these problems to illuminate why the right opposition is unable to deal with them.

One of the main demands is to abolish a centralist Farsi and Shiite nation-state and with it the fictional identity imposed on the people of Iran's oppressed nationalities that prevents them from participating in politics and abandons them to destitution. Though the right opposition claims it will establish a democratic State, they inevitably appeal to a glorious past, the Achaemenian Empire before the advent of Islam, to an Aryan race which is superior to the Arab race and has

more in common with the Europeans than with the peoples of the Middle East. As is obvious, the equality that the right claims to ensure is in conflict with a historical identity that already excludes not only the Arab population in the south of Iran but all the Turks, Kurds, Lors, and Baluchis who do not belong to the “superior race” they have in mind. Also, the desire to revive the first glorious Empire which was, they claim, ruined by the “Arab Invasion,” will certainly provoke further imperialist interventions and projects in the region

Second, the “representative democracy” they want to introduce cannot ensure real equality for different nations, because merely formal or legal democracy permits “a thousand obstacles” (Lenin) to block the way to real equality. The solution to the present despotism is not to formulate a set of laws to guarantee the right of the minorities in mere words but an actual democracy in action. That is why the left in Iran needs to draw a line of demarcation within the notion of democracy itself and show its internal contradictions and conflicts. They must elaborate what kind of democracy recognizes the direct participation of the masses in decision-making and administration of affairs. The alternative proposed for the last two decades is “Shura democracy,” a democracy from below rooted in workplaces and neighborhoods, not based on representatives whose only concern is the benefit of the governing rulers and the accumulation of capital.

It is certain that the established dualism between the “Islamist State” and “Secular State” fails to identify, let alone address, Iran’s major problems, because the social roots of the popular discontent are not the doctrines of Islam but the systematic corruption undertaken under “the banner of Islam” which is just as possible under the banner of some other religion. When the cause of the problem is reduced to Islam, it creates the fictitious perception that a secular regime would be the solution to the problems we face. But, once we turn our attention to secular regimes in the West, it is clear that “authoritarianism” is increasingly necessary to neoliberalism, rather than to Islamic states in particular. The secular state now increasingly appears as the mirror image of the Islamist state, and the condition of market freedom is social and political subjection.

Another demand of the struggling masses is employment and economic equality. What neo-liberal regime in history has guaranteed the means of subsistence to the whole population? Neoliberalism rejects such guarantees on principle. Food, clothing and shelter are private matters for which individuals alone are responsible. The right opposition attributes the current economic problems to “governmental mismanagement” or interference in the market, but the fact is that the existing economic problems originate in the irrationality of neoliberalism itself which has been unflinching pursued by every Iranian government since 1989.

In other words, the alternative developed by the right wing, with the financial support generously extended to them by Saudi Arabia and other world powers, will do nothing to make any fundamental change in the existing relations of production or power relations. As Reza Pahlavi himself publicly declared, the same game will be played, but with a new deck of cards.

Teachers and workers from different sectors of the economy have explicitly criticized the privatization of education and state-owned enterprises as having caused a series of crises not

only for the workers in question, but for the society as a whole. As the director of The Coordination Shura (council) of Cultural Guild Societies of Iran has argued, the privatization of education has prevented over 5 million students from continuing their education because they could not afford the basic means of education, especially during the Covid pandemic which required electronic devices and access to the Internet. Moreover, the students in over-populated state schools receive very low-quality education and only those who attend private schools have a realistic chance of passing the university entrance examinations. The commodification of education has restricted this public opportunity to the children of the bourgeoisie.

5. The concept of *shura*, a term that means consultation or mutual consultation, and which appears in the Qur'an, has been, of course, subject to different interpretations by scholars. In the twentieth century, however, especially in Iran in the 1979 revolution and among Kurds in Iran, Iraq and Syria, workers and the urban poor have used the term to designate forms of self-organization and to further develop the idea, already present in Islam, of the self-organization of communities governed by mutual consultation and therefore direct democracy. In 1978-79, the Left successfully urged the people to form shuras, but they were soon infiltrated and neutralized by clerics loyal to Khomeini. What do you think is the role of the shura form in the struggle in Iran today?

Despite popular opinion in the West, the doctrines of Islam have the capacity to mobilize masses against both imperialism and despotic governing powers. For instance, the Tobacco Workers movement was a national protest directed by Shiite Muslims in 1890-92 against the tobacco concession granted by the Qajar Shah to a British company, ensuring British control over the growth, sale and export of tobacco. Shiism and religion played an oppositional role and developed a discourse of resistance against British imperialism at that time. However, just like any other doctrine, when Islam is used as a means of justifying the dominant power and capitalist relations, it loses its oppositional capacity and is turned against itself.

The concept of Shura which, as you say, is derived from the Qur'an has played a dynamic and contradictory role in the contemporary history of Iran, depending on its conjunction with other elements and forces.

Two to three months before the 1979 revolution, workers played a significant role in directing mass protests toward a revolutionary victory by organizing nationwide strikes directed by "strike committees" developed by the left. Immediately after the revolution, workers' Shuras were formed out of the "strike committees" in almost all of the offices, companies, industrial plants, factories and communities to take full control of the factories whose owners and senior managers had fled the country or to identify the SAVAK agents in those places. They took charge of the factories with an extraordinary sense of responsibility but the provisional government strongly opposed the continuation of their activities, declaring that the victory made their existence redundant and their activities unlawful. They were extensively repressed, dismantled, purged and replaced with "Islamic Shuras and Associations" which played radically different role. These Shuras restored management from above and destroyed the authority of the workers, denying them any administrative or decision-making power.

However, despite all the relentless repressions, the idea of the self-organization of workers through the formation of independent Shuras has never been entirely eliminated and it was revived in the teachers' movement and the struggles by the workers of Haft-Tappeh Sugarcane Plant, HEPCO (Machine Industry Company), and Khuzestan Steel Company two decades later. These Shuras have been capable of formulating demands that challenge the existing regime and the capitalist world order. They go beyond their immediate concerns and link the realization of their demands with equality and justice for the whole of society. Apart from their struggle against the neoliberal economy which has commodified all social relations, they have expressed such demands as the right of children to be taught in their native language, and the right to high-quality and free education for all.

Perhaps most importantly, especially now as Mohammad Habibi, the director of The Coordination Shura (council) has said in an interview: "one of the most significant achievements of the teachers' protest demonstration is to take back the street from the sovereign powers and to normalize the street demonstration. The final change happens in the streets which plays an important role in strengthening civil society."

6. You have argued that in order to make sense of the demonstrations against the forced wearing of the hijab, we need to think of this issue as one variant of the domination of women's bodies that is expressed just as clearly in the prohibitions imposed on the hijab and the burkini in France or the attempt to ban abortion (also called forced pregnancy). This is a very significant point that is in danger of being obscured by the generalized Islamophobia of the West. Could you explain how you see these policies as fundamentally linked?

As many outstanding thinkers argue, power relations are closely linked with the domination of the body. In fact, capitalist relations of production are reproduced through the disciplining of bodies and the production of subservient subjects.

I think we need to understand power not only in its negative sense, that is, in the prohibitions imposed on various aspects of our lives, but in its positive sense, as well, that is, the ways ideological apparatuses produce "normal bodies." While the exercise of power in the prohibition of certain bodily acts is easily detectable, the ideological instruments developed to produce obedient subjects who comply with the established rules and regulations are rendered invisible.

Even in the former case, the prohibitions imposed by Islamic states or many societies in the Global South are highlighted and addressed in North America and Europe as typical features of "backward" states. The backwardness of such states is understood as an inability to modernize to the extent demanded by the IMF and the World Bank or, as in the case of Iran, a stubborn adherence to premodern Islam. But the same acts of prohibition, and the policing of women's dress in the case of France are, in contrast, deemed necessary to the assimilation of Muslim refugees and immigrants into the dominant culture

As to the exercise of power in its positive sense, one can refer to the huge cosmetics industry of which Iranian women are major consumers. The Western media, however, is unconcerned with this sort of body discipline, except to hail it as a sign of progress. Another example is the

production of a “normal body” which has a specific weight, hair color, body shape, and a number of specific corporeal features, which are only achievable through a painful and costly process of plastic surgery. Iran has the highest rate of cosmetic procedures per capita in the world, but this aspect of corporeal discipline remains invisible to the Western media.

The right opposition never ceases to criticize the current regime of Iran for its development of a series of prohibitions derived from Islamic doctrines which intend to control and discipline all the dimensions of private life. They fail to mention, however, the campaign of forced unveiling launched by Reza Shah, which resulted in the confinement of women to their private homes out of a fear of being forcibly exposed on the streets.

One of the critical tasks of the international left is to contest the focus on the domination imposed on the bodies of women in Middle Eastern societies alone and challenge the subjugation of bodies in its multiple forms everywhere it occurs, from forced veiling to forced unveiling, and any other practice which commodifies the bodies of women for economic benefit or political interests.

7. What are the most effective ways people outside of Iran can express their solidarity with the movement in Iran and give it the support it needs?

The international left must help accelerate the process of change by emphasizing that authoritarianism, oppression, destitution, and poverty are the necessary features of the capitalist world system and are not exclusive to Islamic States. The causes of the revolt in Iran go beyond Iran as the unleashing of neoliberalism tears off the “democratic” mask of the “free market” and prepares the objective conditions for revolution. The mass struggles here are inseparably bound up with those of all the oppressed in all the capitalist states. If the left regards the problems here as exclusive to Iran with no relation to the capitalist order, they will fail to ever develop an international movement against the capitalist world order, and it would remain the “end of the history.” Through applying a materialist analysis, we must find the relationship between the movements in the Global South like the current protest in Iran, the Arab Spring, the Sudan Uprisings and those in the Global North like the *Gilet Jaune* protest in France or the Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter movements in the US. The demands and movements of all the oppressed strata must be welcomed and advanced by the left.

It is also immensely important to reject sanctions as an effective way of weakening the established government. Those in power will always come up with tactics to find the capital required to fund their military projects and only the working masses suffer the consequences.

Finally, the international left must radically oppose any foreign intervention under the pretext of “humanitarian intervention” as such interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq only brought about immeasurable death tolls and socio-political disaster.

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